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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1780 (2007), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) until 15 October 2008, and requested me to report on its implementation semi-annually and not later than 45 days prior to its expiration. The present report covers major developments since my report of 22 August 2007 (S/2007/503) and the progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the Mission as set out in Security Council resolutions 1542 (2004), 1608 (2005), 1702 (2006), 1743 (2007) and 1780 (2007), and contains initial reflections on the development of a consolidation plan.

II. Political developments

2. The Government of Haiti has continued its efforts to reach out to political groups and to strengthen State institutions. However, the political situation remains fragile given the continued political divisions and weak State institutions, as well as the absence of any significant improvement in the difficult living conditions of much of the population. Many Haitians have experienced additional hardship associated with a recent increase in the price of a number of commodities and staple products. Further tensions have been generated by the public perception of a deterioration in security conditions, including a rise in the number of kidnappings since last December. Those pressures could be compounded by political manoeuvring as the election campaign for the renewal of one third of the Senate approaches.

3. Despite some significant achievements, differences between branches of Government at times threatened to undermine the level of collaboration necessary to permit effective governance. The branches of Government worked together to enact critical judicial reform legislation. Other important developments involving collaboration included agreement on a new Provisional Electoral Council and the 14 January consensus compromise allowing the 10 senators whose terms expire this year to remain in office until the adoption of a new electoral law. Early in 2008, the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate elected new bureaux, which have expressed the intention of enhancing cooperation between the two chambers.

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4. President Préval continued to emphasize the need to move forward with reform of rule-of-law institutions and to pursue efforts to combat corruption and impunity. In his address at the opening of the forty-eighth parliamentary session, on 14 January 2008, the President stressed that the country should not expect a quick solution to its problems, but that the Haitian people should be creative and retain the will to rebuild the country. The President's call, in the same speech, for a partnership between the public and private sectors was well received, although it has not yet led to specific initiatives. While the President's call for constitutional reform, his queries regarding the need for an army and his statements on the high cost of living have generated some criticism, they have also generated momentum for broad reflection on these issues by political leaders, the private sector and civil society.

5. Internal tensions between the Government and Parliament culminated in the Prime Minister being summoned to appear before the Chamber of Deputies on 28 February. During a 10-hour debate, the Prime Minister and Cabinet members responded to a variety of questions, mostly on the high cost of living, but also on security, justice reform and the development of the country's agriculture. Ultimately, only the 8 deputies who had initiated the procedure voted to censure the Government, whereas 63 voted against and 13 abstained. While that outcome represented an overall endorsement of the Government's approach, the very fact that the Prime Minister was summoned underlined the fragility of the political collaboration and the degree to which it is affected by public frustration. Political dynamics in Haiti also have been strained by the ongoing investigation by an ad hoc Senate commission of allegations of dual nationality against senior officials, as dual nationality is forbidden by the Constitution. In addition, a number of public exchanges and media reports have suggested that tensions continue to exist between the judicial system and the Haitian National Police.

6. Expert-level collaboration between Haitian officials and their counterparts from the Dominican Republic continued, including exchanges of visits by senior officials in the area of the rule of law. Some tensions developed between communities along the border when the authorities of Haiti imposed a ban on the import of all poultry products from the Dominican Republic following reports of avian flu in that country in December 2007. The ban has resulted in shortages of poultry products in Haiti and has led to demonstrations by Haitian and Dominican suppliers. That episode highlighted the importance of ongoing efforts to develop working-level cooperation in the area of border management and regional relations.

7. On 4 September 2007, the ministers of defence of nine Latin American troop-contributing countries held a meeting in Port-au-Prince at which they underlined their commitment to supporting the stabilization process in Haiti. The meeting was an example of the regional solidarity that is crucial for the long-term sustainability of that effort. On 6 March 2008, during the Rio Group summit, held in the Dominican Republic, Haiti was officially admitted as a member of the Group, marking a further step forward in the country's integration into regional structures.

Elections

8. Following extensive consultations with political parties and civil society, President Préval appointed the members of a new Provisional Electoral Council on

11 December 2007. A new Director General of the Council was appointed on 29 February 2008 to replace the former incumbent, who had resigned six weeks after taking office. The new Council has been mandated to organize the election of one third of the Senate, other elections to fill positions that may become vacant and indirect elections for local assemblies and councils once the necessary legal framework has been adopted. As its first task, on 18 February 2008 the Council submitted a draft electoral law to the Government that was subsequently sent to Parliament for consideration.

9. MINUSTAH is helping to plan the logistical and security aspects of the senatorial elections, for which the donor community has expressed its willingness to provide the necessary funding, mostly through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The ongoing updating of the voter rolls by the Haitian National Office of Identification, in collaboration with the Organization of American States, has thus far resulted in the registration of more than 450,000 new voters.

III. Institutional support and the strengthening of the State

10. The institutions of governance continued to suffer from a lack of qualified personnel, poor infrastructure and limited resources. The importance of those challenges has been recognized by President Préval, who has identified the modernization of the State as a main priority for the remainder of his tenure. In July 2007, the Government approved a State reform programme that sets out a vision for the reform of the State administration, provides a framework for the development of a decentralization policy and establishes implementation mechanisms. A recently established steering committee is in charge of reform of the administration, and resources have been allocated from the national budget. In addition to the assistance of the United Nations system, the generous support of the international community remains indispensable to meeting the challenges of this major reform effort.

11. MINUSTAH continues to provide expertise and technical assistance in support of key institutions. The Mission is working with the leadership of both parliamentary chambers to strengthen legislative capacity, with a focus on providing additional resources to specific committees, enhancing communication between the executive and legislative branches and enabling direct access to public sessions through live broadcasts.

12. MINUSTAH is helping the Ministry of Interior and Local Government, through the use of quick-impact projects, to enhance the capacity of municipal councils by providing technical expertise on budget management as well as on the renovation of 10 mayors' offices, under way since July 2007. In an effort to ensure accountability with respect to the use of public funds provided to the municipal councils, the Ministry issued instructions requiring the clearing of old accounts before the disbursement of new allocations and engaged in extensive consultations with relevant actors in all departments to ensure respect for financial procedures. Meanwhile, MINUSTAH hosted various public forums throughout the country in late 2007 to facilitate debate on issues of governance and corruption.

13. MINUSTAH has also assisted efforts by the authorities of Haiti to strengthen border management. The Haitian Presidential Commission on Border Development has hosted four monthly meetings since October 2007 in which the Mission and

other international partners participated. The aim is to establish a coordination council, chaired by the Prime Minister, to support the development of a comprehensive approach to border management whereby the State presence along the border would be reinforced and issues related to immigration, customs and security would be addressed. The Government has designated the President of the Commission as the interim focal point for border management. Officials of the Government of the Dominican Republic have also expressed support for the efforts of MINUSTAH to assist the authorities of Haiti in enhancing border security and promoting the coordination of activities, as appropriate, at all levels.

14. The presence of the Government at the land border and key ports falls far short of what is required in terms of infrastructure, staffing and equipment. With regard to a national maritime presence, only the bases in Port-au-Prince and Cap Haïtien have basic capabilities, and donor support has been pledged to assist the Government in establishing a further base in Les Cayes. The MINUSTAH presence in the area, as described below, can in the short term assist in providing security and some logistical support. However, sustained and coordinated bilateral assistance will be indispensable to enable the State to reach a sufficient level of capability in the areas of customs, immigration and border protection.

IV. Security situation

15. The security situation has improved significantly since the major operations undertaken against gangs in early 2007, but the potential for volatility remains. Since December, several areas of Port-au-Prince have experienced an increase in criminality and in the number of reported kidnappings. The average number of reported kidnappings per month for the period from December 2007 to February 2008 reached 28, up from 11 six months earlier. There are also recurrent indications that gangs may be trying to reorganize themselves.

16. Anti-Government demonstrations have increased, with a particular focus on the rising cost of living. MINUSTAH recorded 164 such demonstrations in the six months leading up to August 2007 and 258 in the subsequent six months. Some of those protests appear to have been organized by political groups, and, while they have been limited in scale to date, they have occurred in a number of areas of the country. There is a risk that those who perceive their interests to be threatened by ongoing reform processes may deliberately seek to foster additional disturbances, including through orchestrated acts of violence. In the regions outside of the capital, the security situation remains generally calm, but occurrences of unrest and popular justice have been reported. Suspected illicit trafficking activities along the coast and by air have the potential to contribute to instability, as do uncontrolled movements of goods and persons across the land border. Misunderstandings between local communities in the border region have shown a tendency to escalate in the absence of State authority.

17. As the strength of the Haitian National Police increases and its professionalism improves, it is gradually becoming more effective in apprehending criminals and several cases of drug shipment seizure by the National Police have been reported. However, the total number of police officers remains well below the minimum required for a country the size of Haiti, and the service has limited resources and

lacks in-depth training. Thus, the active engagement of the MINUSTAH military and police remains indispensable.

18. The Mission continues to provide operational support to the Haitian National Police with military patrols throughout the country and through the activities of its formed police in the key urban areas of Port-au-Prince, Gonaïves and Cap Haïtien. In order to respond to threats in and around Port-au-Prince and to maintain momentum in the combat against criminal activities, MINUSTAH has been working closely with national authorities to adapt its security profile through a combination of mobile and fixed checkpoints, more assertive patrols, targeted operations and a greater presence of officers on foot. MINUSTAH also provides targeted assistance to the efforts of the National Police to respond to major crimes and kidnapping incidents, while securing strategic locations such as the national penitentiary.

19. The Mission deployed military and police personnel to four land border crossings in December. Those efforts will be further supported through the deployment of a formed police unit to Hinche. The second phase of the operation will involve the deployment of MINUSTAH forces in the vicinity of priority ports, selected jointly with the Government. Security is currently being enhanced in those areas through a patrolling presence on land and will be further strengthened by the deployment of a complementary maritime presence. Those efforts are intended primarily to promote security and help extend State authority. It is expected that they will also lead to increased revenue collection by the State. In addition, they should help deter illegal trafficking activities, particularly those related to weapons and narcotics, which have implications for the country's stability. The engagement of other countries in the region, including through the provision of information and complementary patrolling activities, will remain indispensable to the effectiveness of those efforts.

Community violence reduction

20. MINUSTAH continued to pursue its revised community violence reduction programme, which focuses on institutional support, labour-intensive projects and small arms control.

21. Logistical, financial and technical support was provided to the National Commission for Disarmament, Dismantlement and Reintegration in order to reinforce its capacity. The strategic approach adopted by the Government is one of urban development on the basis of a participative process. The Mission will support the efforts of the Government to establish community forums in nine priority areas identified by the Government as requiring immediate attention. Such forums will benefit from a special coordination office established by the Government to fast-track projects within targeted communities.

22. MINUSTAH is also seeking to stabilize vulnerable communities by focusing on the creation of short-term employment, which can facilitate the reintegration of former armed elements. On 1 March, MINUSTAH launched six labour-intensive projects in violence-affected communities. The projects employ 7,572 individuals, including 214 formerly armed individuals and a further seven projects will be launched in the coming weeks. All of the projects were identified jointly with the local authorities. MINUSTAH is also supporting the National Prison Administration

in the implementation of a pilot four-month pre-release reinsertion programme for 200 individuals who are scheduled to be released soon.

23. In addition, MINUSTAH and UNDP are assisting the Government in the revision of current legislation on the import and possession of arms and in the implementation of a weapons registry system. MINUSTAH is also supporting the Haitian National Police in the reform of its weapon registration unit and in a new registration programme for about 6,100 weapons that began in February. MINUSTAH carried out a social mobilization and sensitization campaign aimed at the promotion of a culture of non-violence that targeted some 100,000 citizens in vulnerable communities.

V. Reform of rule-of-law structures

24. The reform of rule-of-law structures is crucial to the consolidation of the stability of Haiti. The passage into law of a framework for judicial independence represented a significant step forward, complementing the earlier adoption of reform plans for the police, judiciary and corrections sectors. It is essential that the plans be translated into action and that the necessary national and international funding be made available to support those reform processes. In accordance with efforts by MINUSTAH to support the synchronized development of all rule-of-law institutions, UNDP, in consultation with the Government, is working towards the establishment of a joint rule-of-law trust fund, which could facilitate the mobilization and coordination of international aid. In all these areas, bilateral support and assistance remains indispensable.

25. While these longer-term reform processes are taking effect, the Government is seeking to strengthen the penal chain through targeted assistance in processing high-priority cases so as to limit the risk that those arrested for serious crimes will never be charged or brought before a court, owing to a failure to collect evidence, follow proper procedures or adequately document cases. President Préval has requested the assistance of MINUSTAH in ensuring the effective judicial review of such high-priority cases related to kidnapping and organized crime.

Strengthening the security capacity of Haiti

26. Further progress was made during the reporting period in strengthening the Haitian National Police. However, much remains to be done to reach the total of 14,000 officers that was identified in the Haitian National Police reform plan as necessary for basic policing duties. Further efforts will be required to achieve the complement of 18,000 to 20,000 uniformed officers needed to undertake the full range of security-related tasks, including duties related to the coastguard, border control, fire brigades and the penal system.

27. Approximately 8,444 officers are now serving within the Haitian National Police; however, some 1,000 of them are dedicated wholly or in part to other functions such as firefighting (144), coastguard (69) and corrections (790). Among the 7,441 officers who are assuming purely policing duties, 627 who graduated early in November 2007 as the nineteenth class of the Police Academy have been assigned to Port-au-Prince's new Mobile Intervention Brigade. Selection for the

twentieth class of police recruits is currently ongoing. For officers who are already serving, MINUSTAH monitoring and mentoring, including field training, has helped to reinforce core values and bring skill levels up to the same standards as those of Academy graduates.

28. As part of the vetting process, a total of 3,588 files have been or are under review in five departments by joint Haitian National Police-MINUSTAH teams; the majority of those concern recruits of previous classes of the Police Academy. Sixty-one recruits have been dismissed to date as a result of their background checks. In total, 223 closed files are ready to be handed over to the Haitian authorities; the rest remain under review.

29. The Mission continues to work closely with the national authorities, UNDP and donors in developing the institutional capacity of the Haitian National Police, including through the engagement of MINUSTAH police officers in training, curriculum development, monitoring and mentoring. In order to contribute effectively, the Mission is seeking to reinforce its police component with personnel having specialized skills in such areas as forensic investigation, border management, administration and logistics.

30. At the request of President Préval, MINUSTAH is prioritizing efforts to strengthen the capacity of the judicial police of Haiti, which has a key role to play in the fight against impunity and major crimes. MINUSTAH is helping the authorities of Haiti in the development of a reform package that would include action plans for competency and performance evaluations, staffing, the reallocation of office space, equipment, technological improvements, and technical and ethical training. The laboratory capacity of the Haitian National Police will be increased in the coming months with the installation of systems for fingerprinting and ballistics.

31. MINUSTAH continues to mainstream gender issues in the Haitian National Police through the development of educational material for the Police Academy and training jointly with National Police gender focal points. A registration exercise aimed at encouraging women to join the police force resulted in thousands of women applying for some 150 places in the twentieth class; 710 women passed the entrance examination. Currently, 6 per cent of Haitian National Police officers undertaking policing duties are women.

32. Some $25 million in bilateral support has been pledged or contributed to date in support of the police reform plan, aimed at, inter alia, the establishment of a new General Inspectorate headquarters, the refurbishment of police stations in the south and west departments, the construction of a maritime base in Les Cayes, the provision of equipment for regular operations, and the expansion of the Police Academy in order to permit two basic training courses, each with 750 recruits, to take place simultaneously. The latter project would make a significant contribution towards reaching the target, noted above, of 14,000 officers. Funding for quick-impact projects has been critical in some of the urgent infrastructure rehabilitation projects.

33. Meanwhile, a Presidential Commission was established in October 2007 to undertake a process of reflection on the reinforcement of public security in Haiti. In its first report, issued in January, the Commission discussed the definition of a defence policy and national security. It will continue its consultations with national and international actors prior to submitting its final recommendations.

Judicial system

34. A significant step forward was taken in the judicial reform process with the adoption of three key laws, promulgated on 20 December, regarding the independence of the judiciary, the establishment of the Superior Council for the Judiciary and of the School for Magistrates, and the status of Magistrates. Those laws constitute a cornerstone for judicial reform as they provide for supervisory and disciplinary measures, including a certification process and a judicial inspectorate, judicial career management, a single initial training for magistrates and an adjustment of wages and working conditions of magistrates. The follow-up committee on judicial reform (see S/2007/503, para. 39), which continues to play an important role in steering and promoting the reform process, facilitated the necessary consensus in Parliament. MINUSTAH and UNDP are currently seeking to coordinate the activities of donor countries to support the implementation of those laws.

35. In the framework of its national growth and poverty reduction strategy paper, the Government of Haiti has adopted a three-year justice reform plan in line with the five pillars that were defined following broad consultations with local and international actors: the reorganization and modernization of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security; the strengthening of the judiciary; improved access to justice and efficiency of the courts; the rehabilitation and development of corrections facilities; and the modernization of key legislation. Special focus is needed on the reorganization of and capacity-building for the Ministry, the establishment of the Superior Council for the Judiciary and the reopening of the School for Magistrates.

36. MINUSTAH is providing technical support and advice to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the School for Magistrates in preparation for the school's opening. The Mission has also trained 150 justices of the peace on the implementation of internal rules and regulations, 60 prosecutors and police officers in summary trial procedure and 200 judges, police officers and medical personnel on forensic investigations. MINUSTAH has continued to hold daily meetings with judicial actors throughout the country so as to enhance coordination between the judiciary and the police while monitoring both criminal court sessions and sensitive cases. MINUSTAH also provides advice and technical assistance on a day-to-day basis to the Ministry and judicial actors and helps to coordinate international engagement to ensure a common approach to judicial reform.

37. The Mission has continued its efforts to work with the authorities of Haiti, donors and other stakeholders to promote the availability of legal assistance to those in need. A first step was taken with the establishment of a legal aid office in Cité Soleil on 11 January 2008. It is foreseen that five additional offices will be opened throughout the country.

38. The new laws and the three-year justice reform plan include key targets and associated timelines. The sensitivity of these issues and the time required for consultation may make it difficult to adhere to a specific timeline. For example, it is anticipated that the installation of the Superior Council of the Judiciary could take up to six months. Continued prioritization of this process by the authorities of Haiti will be essential in order to maintain momentum.

Corrections system

39. With the adoption of the strategic plan on the National Prison Administration, the authorities of Haiti have outlined a process for the reform of the country's correctional system. However, the current security and human rights situation in the country's prisons remains difficult and requires urgent attention. As at 31 January 2008, more than 6,600 detainees were being held in 17 prisons in an area that, according to international standards, should not accommodate more than 1,088 inmates. The National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince currently houses 3,239 inmates in accommodations that would be appropriate for no more than 438.

40. Nationwide, 82.75 per cent of prisoners remain in pretrial detention. The Ministry of Justice and Public Security has taken steps to address that issue through the work of the Consultative Commission on Prolonged Pretrial Detention and by reducing the average time spent in police custody and increasing the number of court hearings. The work of the Commission itself, whose mandate has been extended to all jurisdictions of the country for an additional six months, has thus far resulted in the release of approximately 550 pretrial detainees — 10 per cent of the total. That, however, has failed to offset the steady flow of new detainees or compensate for the lack of prosecutions. In addition, the Commission's decisions have generated some controversy, and questions have been raised concerning their security implications, their consistency and the rationale behind them. Overall, more systematic efforts are required if the number of persons in pretrial detention is to be significantly reduced.

41. MINUSTAH has continued to provide assistance in maintaining security in prison facilities and in undertaking immediate measures to respond to urgent needs, while supporting longer-term reform. The Mission, together with UNDP, is providing advice in the areas of training, infrastructure, case management, health, policy and day-to-day operations. MINUSTAH has also supported the increased cooperation on prisons between the authorities of Haiti and of the Dominican Republic, who have exchanged visits and have agreed to extend their collaboration, mainly in the area of training.

VI. Human rights

42. The improvements observed in the human rights situation during the last reporting period have been maintained, with fewer cases of arbitrary arrest, greater respect for legal deadlines related to police custody and a decline from previous years in the number of allegations of torture and ill-treatment. However, the tenuous nature of those improvements suggests the need to accelerate the ongoing institutional reforms, which are based on universal human rights principles. Moreover, while sustainable in-depth reforms in the field of rule of law and institution-building will inevitably take time, additional concrete and symbolic results are needed in the short term in order to strengthen public confidence.

43. During the reporting period, MINUSTAH forwarded to the authorities of Haiti information regarding four cases in which individuals were allegedly killed by Haitian National Police officers. The Haitian National Police General Inspectorate continued to step up its efforts to promote the fight against impunity and the accountability of the National Police. MINUSTAH maintained its close

collaboration with the General Inspectorate and the Port-au-Prince Prosecutor's Office with a view to enhancing their effectiveness.

44. The growing number of lynching cases remains a serious concern. From August 2007 to January 2008, 66 incidents were reported that resulted in the deaths of 30 individuals and injuries to 45 others. Eighteen cases were reported during January alone. Although the Haitian National Police has intervened recently in a more decisive manner, few lynching cases have been formally investigated.

45. MINUSTAH has continued to support the adoption of enabling legislation on the Office of the Ombudsman, in conformity with the Paris Principles on national human rights institutions, and worked to improve the Office's visibility through joint programming. While the Office has established some small regional offices, its functioning is hindered by lack of financial support and an inadequate legislative framework.

46. During the reporting period, MINUSTAH organized training for police officers, magistrates and national human rights non-governmental organizations on human rights, law enforcement and due-process standards. In cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, a workshop on reporting to international treaty monitoring bodies was conducted for ministry representatives in advance of the establishment of an inter-ministerial commission in charge of preparing the country's second periodic report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Gender

47. In collaboration with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Rights and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, MINUSTAH hosted in February a visit by a high-level delegation and supported the validation process of the Government's initial report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Mission also worked with the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to support the National Plan of Action to Combat Violence against Women. According to national findings, domestic physical violence appears to be the most commonly reported type of violence against women, followed by sexual violence. There appears to be an increase in the number of documented cases of physical and sexual violence against women and minors and a decrease in the number of reported gang rapes compared with the period from 2004 to 2006. It seems that improved security, improved access to assistance and public information campaigns may be motivating more victims of sexual violence to seek help.

48. During the reporting period, MINUSTAH, together with the United Nations Development Fund for Women and local non-governmental organizations, established a Gender Working Group on the Promotion of Women's Political Rights for the upcoming senatorial elections and beyond. It has also continued to provide leadership training for women involved in politics at all levels.

Child protection

49. The improved security situation has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of children affected by armed violence. However, several areas of concern remain, including the kidnapping and trafficking of children and the rape of girls. The number of minors held in prolonged pretrial detention increased to 266 in February 2008 from 226 in July 2007, while the situation of children in institutional care centres continues to be a source of grave concern.

50. MINUSTAH, UNDP and UNICEF are continuing to work with the Ministries of Justice and Social Affairs to improve the administration of justice for children in detention and are supporting the efforts of the Government to strengthen the monitoring of institutional care centres. MINUSTAH and UNICEF provided training to Haitian National Police officers in four regions on child protection, and efforts are ongoing to ensure training in all commissariats. A monitoring and reporting mechanism has been developed within MINUSTAH, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1612 (2005). MINUSTAH, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), provided support to the national authorities in transporting 47 children so that they could be reunited with their families in Jérémie. The children, between the ages of 2 and 8 years, had been victims of trafficking and were found in Port-au-Prince in August 2007.

VII. Humanitarian, recovery and development activities

Socio-economic situation

51. The consolidation of stability in Haiti will require — in parallel to the peacekeeping efforts under way — some measurable advances with regard to socio-economic concerns. The close link between security and development was particularly evident in the context of the rising public discontent at the high cost of living.

52. The delivery of short-term palliatives and their effect on longer-term progress will depend primarily on collaborative efforts that draw on policy decisions and political will by the political leadership of Haiti, initiatives by the country's private sector and engagement by the United Nations country team, the international financial institutions and bilateral donors; Haitians living abroad could also contribute. Prospects for the country's longer-term recovery depend on a continued commitment by the country's leadership to work together and to avoid any relapse into crisis, which could undermine investor confidence.

53. In macroeconomic terms, Haiti has continued to make progress in stabilizing the economy under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility programme. In 2007, real growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to have risen to 3.2 per cent, bringing it back to its 1991 level. Owing to population growth, per capita GDP, however, remains 23 per cent below its 1991 level and 38 per cent below its peak level, which was reached in 1980. The annual inflation rate declined to 7.6 per cent in August 2007, down from 24 per cent in August 2005, but has since increased, to 11 per cent in January 2008. The currency remained stable, and international reserves rose to $545 million.

54. The Government budget for 2007-2008 envisages a rise in expenditures, excluding foreign aid, by 0.6 per cent of GDP, with a focus on education, health, justice, public security, agriculture, infrastructure and tourism development. IMF estimates a continued GDP growth rate in 2008 of 4.3 per cent. Donors and the United Nations system continue to hold regular monthly meetings with the Prime Minister to ensure that Government expenditures and external aid are mutually reinforcing and adequately coordinated. Further support from the international community, as well as a renewed commitment to aid coordination and effectiveness, is indispensable in order to break structural and institutional bottlenecks and to help create an environment conducive to investment, which is essential for the country to capitalize on its potential in such sectors as tourism, manufacturing and agriculture.

55. In November 2007, following extensive consultations supported by UNDP, the Government submitted its national growth and poverty reduction strategy paper to the World Bank and IMF. The paper outlines the development agenda of Haiti and its strategy for meeting the Millennium Development Goals and should form the basis for future assistance strategies. The Government intends to consolidate macroeconomic stability and strengthen conditions for sustainable economic recovery by improving the business climate, reinforcing the capacity of public administration, reforming economic governance and rehabilitating and developing the social and physical infrastructure. The Government has called for a high-level international conference, which is to be held in Port-au-Prince on 24 and 25 April 2008. It is hoped that the conference will facilitate agreement on a framework for financing and secure enhanced predictability and an increased level of budgetary support for the poverty reduction strategy paper. The conference will also provide an opportunity to reinforce donor coordination and discuss measures for increased aid effectiveness. Meanwhile, the United Nations country team, in collaboration with MINUSTAH, has begun to formulate the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for 2009 to 2011 in support of the Government strategy paper.

56. In parallel with macroeconomic development, it remains urgent to address the immediate hardship experienced by the Haitian population, 76 per cent of whom still live on less than $2 a day. Weak purchasing power remains a constant preoccupation in connection with basic daily items and imported goods, which represent some 60 per cent of available products on the market. Furthermore, the recent increase in the price of such staples as flour, rice and cooking oil has led to additional suffering, while access to basic social services (health care, education, potable water) remains extremely limited. According to the poverty reduction strategy paper, of 133 communes, only 2 provide adequate services, while 51 are described as very weak or extremely weak. The continued persistence of extreme poverty in rural areas is a major factor in the rapid growth of the urban population. As a result of those realities, Haiti ranked 146th of 177 States in the UNDP human development index for 2007/2008.

57. MINUSTAH and the United Nations country team have continued to promote, together with the Government, donors and the private sector, ways to promote the delivery of a "peace dividend" to the most vulnerable communities in Haiti. With donor support, the MINUSTAH military component completed a series of small-scale projects aimed at delivering a peace dividend to more than 25,000 people in those communities most affected by violence. In addition, a new multi-donor relief, recovery and reconciliation fund, managed by the Office for the Coordination of

Humanitarian Affairs, has been set up to provide rapid and flexible funding to address gaps in responses to natural disasters and for recovery and reconciliation activities. Donors are encouraged to contribute to the fund.

58. MINUSTAH is also pursuing, together with the World Bank, the provision of a grant to support infrastructure improvements that would facilitate operational activities and favour local economic development. It is estimated that in 2007, more than 80,000 person-months of employment were created through the implementation of activities of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IOM, UNDP and the World Food Programme (WFP). It will be crucial, in conjunction with plans by the Government to triple the size of its Communal Impact Programme so as to promote local job creation and allow local entrepreneurs to recapitalize their businesses, to expand job-intensive initiatives, in terms both of beneficiaries and of regions. The commitment by the Government to a national strategy for watershed management, which is supported by the United Nations country team, is an important step in that direction, as the strategy will promote environmental recuperation and significant job creation, often in vulnerable areas.

Humanitarian efforts

59. During the reporting period, several hurricanes and tropical weather systems severely affected Haiti. The heaviest damage was inflicted by Hurricanes Dean in August and Noël in October, which affected more than 40,000 families. MINUSTAH provided extensive support in the affected areas by carrying out mass evacuations, helicopter and land assessments and the distribution of relief assistance. The response of the Government to those emergencies was supported by the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and partner organizations. The delivery of assistance was facilitated by a grant from the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund and funds from several donors. UNICEF supported the provision of hygiene kits and blankets and facilitated access to potable water; WFP distributed more than 130 tons of various food commodities; and the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) facilitated access to medical care. Furthermore, IOM improved conditions in temporary shelters and assisted in recovery efforts, while FAO launched recovery projects for the distribution of seeds and other agricultural resources to the most affected areas. Significant damage to crops resulted in greater vulnerability in terms of food security in parts of the country. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is conducting a baseline survey to improve joint needs assessments following natural disasters while enhancing preparedness and strengthening humanitarian coordination and response mechanisms.

60. On 5 November 2007, the Government launched a mass immunization campaign throughout the country, drawing on support from PAHO/WHO, UNICEF and MINUSTAH, which played a critical role in ensuring the necessary security and logistical support. To date, 397,315 children under the age of 5 have been vaccinated with polio vaccine; 1,848,200 aged 1 to 19 years with measles and rubella vaccine; and 123,216 women of reproductive age with diphtheria and tetanus vaccine. A total of 624,406 schoolchildren in five departments have received deworming treatment. In January 2008, the Government, with the cooperation of UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, bilateral donors and international financial institutions, adopted an implementation

plan for the national Education for All strategy. As part of its programmes targeting pregnant women and malnourished children, WFP distributed more than 15,000 tons of direct food assistance to more than 670,000 beneficiaries. The Mission continued to support the platform of people living with HIV/AIDS and, together with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, has developed a communications training programme for persons with HIV. Two sessions on the issue of HIV, aimed at identifying capacities to reinforce the response on the basis of the HIV multisectoral national strategic plan 2008-2012, were conducted at the nine MINUSTAH multimedia centres, with the participation of the Ministry of Health and local organizations. The United Nations Office for Project Services continued to support the operational management of the nine multimedia centres, which promote dialogue with civil society and the local media and authorities.

VIII. Personnel conduct and discipline

61. MINUSTAH continued to implement the approved strategy of prevention, enforcement and victim assistance to address the problem of sexual abuse and exploitation. During the period under review, training was provided directly to 3,070 Mission personnel — 1,486 military personnel, 793 police officers, and 791 national and international civilian staff. The Mission received 10 allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation, which were sent to the Office of Internal Oversight Services for investigation. A total of 123 military personnel and 1 police officer from seven countries were repatriated on disciplinary grounds.

62. That total includes a group of 111 Sri Lankan troops who were repatriated at the beginning of November 2007, with the cooperation of the authorities of Sri Lanka, following allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. National judicial proceedings are now under way, drawing on the findings of investigators from the Office and from Sri Lanka who were deployed to Haiti.

IX. Preparation of a consolidation plan

63. Significant progress has been made towards the stabilization of Haiti in a relatively short period of time. However, those achievements remain fragile and could swiftly unravel if they are not consolidated through further sustained and coordinated efforts in priority areas. While the primary responsibility for achieving stability lies with the Haitians themselves, MINUSTAH, together with the wider international community, has an essential contribution to make.

64. In that context, MINUSTAH has launched a process of consultations with the authorities of Haiti to identify key benchmarks by which consolidation of the emerging stability can be measured, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1780 (2007). As reflected in the present report, those initial discussions suggest that critical milestones could include:

(a) Continued progress in the resolution of political differences through dialogue and the successful completion of a cycle of elections that culminates in the smooth installation of a democratically chosen President and legislature in 2011;

(b) The establishment of a sustainable security structure that would enable Haiti to respond effectively to potential threats within the country and along its land

and maritime borders while respecting international standards and individual freedoms. This would include the creation of a basic policing capacity of 14,000 officers, envisaged to be in place by 2011, and the establishment of related institutional structures, as stipulated by the Haitian National Police reform plan, together with adequate arrangements for border security;

(c) The establishment of an independent and credible judicial and penal system that respects and upholds human rights and is accessible to all citizens. Within the area of the justice system, key measurements of progress could include the establishment of the Superior Council of the Judiciary and progress in the implementation of a certification process. It would also include the opening of the School for Magistrates and progress in the training of a critical mass of magistrates, prosecutors and other judicial actors. The completion of investigations and trials in connection with a number of high-profile cases involving corruption and organized crime could also make a key difference in strengthening public confidence in the justice system. Within the penal system, it is vital to undertake, in accordance with the reform plan, the infrastructural improvements required to prevent the gross abuse of the human rights of those subject to incarceration and to facilitate the reinsertion of those who have been released;

(d) The extension of State authority throughout the country through the establishment of legitimate, transparent and accountable democratic State institutions, down to the local level, with the capacity to collect and disburse funds for the benefit of the population, including the establishment of a viable system of border management.

In addition to the achievement of the goals with regard to which MINUSTAH has mandated responsibilities, lasting stability will require a tangible improvement in the living standards of the population and the creation of conditions for economic recovery. Key indicators of progress could include the availability of basic services such as health care and education, together with an increase in State revenue, a significant rise in GDP (with prospects for sustained growth over several consecutive years), a rise in the employment rate and an increase in internal and foreign direct investment.

65. In my next report, on the basis of ongoing discussions between the Mission and the authorities of Haiti, I intend to provide additional details on these mutually reinforcing objectives, including further benchmarks by which progress can be measured.

66. Progress towards attaining such benchmarks would help to guide the future activities and configuration of the Mission as well as its coordination efforts with key partners. The achievement of some of the benchmarks may be beyond the capacity and mandate of the Mission alone. However, they will assist in identifying the conditions that are necessary for the authorities of Haiti to sustain stability, with the support of bilateral, regional and multilateral development actors, and in evaluating the country's progress towards a critical threshold of stability that would obviate the need for another peacekeeping operation.

X. Mission support

67. In addition to routine tasks, key Mission support activities have included the logistical facilitation of the military and police deployment at the four land border

crossings with the Dominican Republic. Reconnaissance trips for eight seaport border locations have been completed for the deployment of maritime assets when they become available.

68. During the reporting period, MINUSTAH continued to integrate HIV/AIDS awareness and training into the Mission's activities. A total of 3,575 personnel have now been sensitized through briefing sessions. MINUSTAH has continued to promote and maintain the availability of voluntary counselling and confidential testing at two permanent sites and through one mobile team. To date, more than 1,200 tests have been carried out.

69. Since August 2007, 3 MINUSTAH personnel have died, 23 have been medically evacuated to locations outside Haiti and 32 have been medically evacuated to higher-level care within Haiti. Mission personnel continue to confront serious security hazards.

XI. Financial aspects

70. By its resolution 61/284, the General Assembly appropriated the amount of $535,372,800, equivalent to $44,614,400 per month, for the maintenance of MINUSTAH for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008. The proposed budget for the period from 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 has been submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration at the second part of its resumed sixty-second session.

71. As at 30 November 2007, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for MINUSTAH amounted to $418.8 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at that date amounted to $3,153.8 million.

72. As at 31 January 2008, amounts owed to troop and formed police contributors to MINUSTAH totalled $101.8 million. Reimbursement of troop costs has been made for the period up to 31 May 2007 and, for contingent-owned equipment, up to 31 March 2007, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XII. Observations

73. Since my previous report, significant strides have been made in key areas, giving grounds for hope while also highlighting the need for continued efforts. Continued collaboration among the political leadership has permitted the adoption of a legal framework for the judiciary and agreement on the terms of Senators and on the establishment of the Provisional Electoral Council. Furthermore, with the contribution of the MINUSTAH military and police, the security situation has improved considerably in the past year. In cooperation with the authorities of Haiti, the Mission has adjusted its profile and operation so as to tackle criminal activity in the capital. The Mission also initiated its redeployment along the country's borders to reinforce the authority of the State. Significant, if incremental, progress has been made in the implementation of rule-of-law reform programmes, along with renewed efforts to strengthen other State institutions. Macroeconomic indicators have continued to improve, and the country has experienced economic growth at a level that had not been possible for decades.

74. However, the potential for regression remains apparent. Tensions between individual political actors and among branches of Government have distracted from the reform agenda. Together with an increase in the number of kidnappings and continued rumours concerning the recomposition of gangs, those events have tended to undermine public confidence. The institutional capacity of the country remained in precarious condition, hindering the implementation of rule of law and the delivery of basic public services and affecting the investment climate. Meanwhile, difficulties in translating a positive macroeconomic environment into tangible improvements in living conditions have not only imposed real hardship on the population, but also contributed to the risk of a relapse into instability. In the face of that challenge, the delivery of short-term economic palliatives could make a critical difference.

75. It is imperative that all those involved in the stabilization of Haiti redouble their efforts to enable the country to seize this historic opportunity to emerge from the destructive cycles of the past. Primary responsibility in this regard belongs to the leadership and institutions of Haiti, whose collaboration with one another is indispensable for continued progress. It is incumbent upon the executive and legislative branches of Government to persevere in jointly outlining strategies for the future and in their implementation. Likewise, to be effective, justice and law-enforcement institutions must cooperate and be seen to do so. Any perceptions of differences between them will inevitably weaken both. Such efforts must be buttressed by the private sector, whose initiative and resources are of critical importance, and by opinion-makers, who can help foster public engagement in what must be a broad endeavour to create a better future.

76. Strong international involvement remains indispensable for continued progress. The contribution of the MINUSTAH military and police remains crucial to the continued response to security threats and criminal activity and in forging a sense of security and supporting State authority along the border — an area in which the involvement of other countries in the region is also necessary in order for such efforts to be effective. The involvement of MINUSTAH in rule-of-law reform and in other key areas for stability remains central to the successful strengthening of State institutions. Institutional reform cannot succeed without extensive bilateral support. It is hoped that the establishment of a rule-of-law trust fund will provide a useful vehicle for channelling assistance in this area. The coordinated efforts of donors, together with those of the United Nations country team and the international financial institutions, are also vital to improve socio-economic conditions, which are inextricably linked to the achievement of stability.

77. The success of the stabilization process will require sustained efforts. The preparation of a consolidation plan with measurable benchmarks, as requested by the Security Council in its resolution 1780 (2007), could help to avert a premature disengagement, which, as has been seen elsewhere, can lead to a rapid reversal of all that has been achieved. As noted in the present report, MINUSTAH has initiated the preparation of such a plan, based on consultation with the authorities of Haiti. I look forward to providing further details of this plan, including the relevant benchmarks, in my next report to the Security Council.

78. I would like to conclude by expressing my sincere gratitude to my Special Representative, Hédi Annabi, and to the men and women of MINUSTAH, whose dedication and commitment to the stabilization of Haiti are making a crucial difference, as well as to those Governments that have provided troops and police to the operation.

Annex I

United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti: countries providing military staff and contingents (as at 26 March 2008)

	Staff officers		*Troops*		
Country	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Total*
Argentina	—	9	22	530	561
Bolivia	—	3	6	209	218
Brazil	—	14[a]	6	1 193[b]	1 213
Canada	—	4	—	—	4
Chile	—	6	6	487	499
Croatia	—	3	—	—	3
Ecuador	—	1	—	66	67
France	—	2	—	—	2
Guatemala	—	5	7	107	119
Jordan	—	10	—	750	760
Nepal	—	11	13	1 086	1 110
Pakistan	—	1	—	—	1
Paraguay	—	—	—	31	31
Peru	—	5	—	205	210
Philippines	—	2	11	144	157
Sri Lanka	—	10	—	950	960
United States of America	1	3	—	—	4
Uruguay	—	13	55	1 078	1 146
Total	**1**	**102**	**126**	**6 836**	**7 065**

[a] Including the Force Commander.
[b] Including one Bolivian officer serving with the Brazilian contingent.

Annex II

United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti: countries providing police officers and formed police units (as at 26 March 2008)

	Police officers		*Formed police units*		
Country	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Total*
Australia	—	—	—	—	—
Argentina	—	4	—	—	4
Benin	—	61	—	—	61
Brazil	—	4	—	—	4
Burkina Faso	—	19	—	—	19
Cameroon	1	23	—	—	24
Canada	7	87	—	—	94
Central African Republic	—	1	—	—	1
Chad	—	1	—	—	1
Chile	1	13	—	—	14
China	—	9	8	117	134
Colombia	—	2	—	—	2
Côte d'Ivoire	3	34	—	—	37
Croatia	—	1	—	—	1
Democratic Republic of the Congo	—	2	—	—	2
Egypt	—	29	—	—	29
El Salvador	—	3	—	—	3
France	4	53	—	—	57
Grenada	—	3	—	—	3
Guinea	4	84	—	—	88
Italy	—	5	—	—	5
Jordan	—	19	—	290	309
Madagascar	—	1	—	—	1
Mali	—	47	—	—	47
Nepal	2	23	7	118	150
Niger	1	65	—	—	66
Nigeria	—	6	38	87	131
Pakistan	—	—	—	250	250
Philippines	5	12	—	—	17
Romania	8	16	—	—	24
Russian Federation	—	4	—	—	4
Rwanda	—	11	—	—	11
Senegal	—	64	—	83	147
Serbia	1	4	—	—	5

Country	Police officers		Formed police units		Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Spain	3	43	—	—	46
Sri Lanka	—	33	—	—	33
Togo	—	3	—	—	3
Turkey	2	58	—	—	60
Uruguay	—	4	—	—	4
United States of America	3	42	—	—	45
Yemen	—	1	—	—	1
Total	**45**	**894**	**53**	**945**	**1 937**

MINUSTAH
Deployment as of March 2008
Force Headquarters
Battalion boundary
International boundary
Departmental boundary
National capital
Departmental capital
Town, village
Main road
Secondary road
Airport
CUBA
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CARIBBEAN SEA
HAITI
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
NORD - OUEST
NORD
NORD - EST
ARTIBONITE
CENTRE
OUEST
SUD
GRANDE - ANSE
NIPPES
SUD - EST
Port-de-Paix
St. Louis du Nord
Cap-Haïtien
Fort-Liberté
Gonaïves
Saint-Marc
Hinche
Mirebalais
Port-au-Prince
Jacmel
Les Cayes
Jérémie
Anse-à-Foleur
Golfe de la Gonâve
Canal de la Tortue
Canal de Saint-Marc
Canal de la Gonâve
Presqu'île des Barradères
Presqu'île du Sud
Presqu'île de Jérémie
Presqu'île de Tiburon
Pointe-à-Raquette
Cap Rajmond
Baie de Jacmel
Baie de Port-au-Prince
Baie de Mancenille
Baie de Henne
Baie de Gonaïves
Baie de Port-de-Paix
Baie de Caracol
Baie de Fort-Liberté
Baie de Manzanille
Baie de Port-Salut
Baie de Tiburon
Baie de Miragoâne
Baie de Petite-Rivière
Baie de Grande-Saline
Baie de Port-Margot
Baie de Limbé
Baie de Terre-Neuve
Baie de Bombardopolis
Baie de Mancenille
Baie de Caracol
Baie de Fort-Liberté
Baie de Manzanille
Baie de Port-Salut
Baie de Tiburon
Baie de Miragoâne
Baie de Petite-Rivière
Baie de Grande-Saline
Baie de Port-Margot
Baie de Limbé
Baie de Terre-Neuve
Baie de Bombardopolis
Baie de Port-de-Paix
Baie de Gonaïves
Baie de Port-au-Prince
Baie de Jacmel